



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Office of Higher Education

Testimony
by
Jane A. Ciarleglio
Executive Director, Office of Higher Education
before the
Appropriations Committee
Tuesday, February 24, 2015
regarding
House Bill 6824: An Act Concerning the State Budget
For the Biennium Ending June 30, 2017

Good morning Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Kane, Representative Ziobron, and distinguished members of the Appropriations committee. For the record, I am Jane Ciarleglio, Executive Director of the Office of Higher Education. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony regarding the Governor's recommended biennial budget. The reductions proposed by this budget are very difficult, and we are fully appreciative of the challenging task before you.

For the Office of Higher Education, the Governor's proposal would reduce our budget for FY 2016 by 10.4 percent and for FY 2017 by 16.8 percent. Most certainly, the greatest impact would be to the Governor's Scholarship Program, which is administered by our agency and is the state's chief means of awarding financial aid to students attending our public and independent colleges. The budget, as proposed, would eliminate aid going to new students attending independent colleges starting next fall. Students currently in the program would continue to receive their grants until they graduate. Currently, the Governor's Scholarship Program assists approximately 1,870 private college students who receive an average award of \$2,100.

Also significant, the proposed budget would eliminate state funding of four programs operated by our agency, most notably the long-standing Alternate Route to Certification and the newer English Language Learner Program. The two other programs slated for elimination are awards going to children of deceased or disabled Vietnam veterans, and our student exchange program with Germany. When all combined, the reductions would affect 2,000 individuals.

Our agency will continue to fulfill our responsibilities for upholding the state's high standards of academic quality and providing the best level of service to the students, colleges, and residents of Connecticut.

Thank you. I would be happy to respond to questions.